THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO CONCERT CHOIR

JOHN TUTTLE, CONDUCTOR

WALTER HALL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 1981

8 P.M.

PROGRAM

Yarmouth Fair — PETER WARLOCK
arr. C. Armstrong Gibbs

Five English Folk Songs — arr. RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
- The Dark Eyed Sailor
- The Springtime of the Year
- Just as the Tide was Flowing
- The Lover's Ghost
- Wassail Song

Michael Mulrooney (Conducting Major), conductor

Five Negro Spirituals ("A Child of Our Time") — MICHAEL TIPPETT
- Steal Away
- Nobody Knows
- Go Down, Moses
- By and By
- Deep River

INTERMISSION

To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water — FREDERICK DELIUS

David Jafelice (Conducting Major), conductor

Faire is the Heaven — WILLIAM H. HARRIS

Fancies — JOHN RUTTER
- Tell Me Where Is Fancy Bred
- There Is a Garden in her Face
- The Urchins' Dance
- Riddle Song
- Midnight's Bell
- The Bellman's Song

Brian Finley, piano

This evening's program presents the music of five English composers. The first of these is Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), the most important English composer of his generation and a key figure in the 20th-century revival of English music. Vaughan Williams studied composition at the Royal College of Music in London with Parry, Wood, and Stanford, and subsequently studied with Bruch in Berlin and Ravel in Paris. As a student, he felt a deep dissatisfaction with the English musical scene of the day. Despite his

studies abroad, he soon recognized that, creatively, salvation would be found not in imitating foreign models, but in a regenerative use of native resources. "Art, like charity, should begin at home," he wrote in 1912. "If it is to be of any value it must grow out of the very life of the artist, the community in which he lives, the nation to which he belongs."

This view led him to Elizabethan and Jacobean music, and above all to English folk song, which influenced his music all his life. For a time he also became an active collector of folk songs. Like Bartók and Kodály in Hungary, he toured the countryside, noting down the tunes and words as they were sung by elderly village singers. From 1903 to 1913, he collected over 800 folk songs, many of which later appeared in his compositions.

The Five English Folk Songs were collected at this time and were then freely arranged by Vaughan Williams for unaccompanied chorus. In his hands "The Dark Eyed Sailor" became a dialogue between the sailor and his lady. In "The Springtime of the Year", Vaughan Williams extracted two verses from what was apparently a much longer poem and enclosed them in between a vocalised prelude and epilogue. In each case he harmonized the melody, often with a different harmony for each verse. No matter how he arranged the songs, however, Vaughan Williams was careful not to destroy the essential quality of the original folk song.

The music of Frederick Delius (1862-1934), ten years Vaughan Williams' senior, is international in style rather than overtly national. No doubt this is due in part to the circumstances of Delius's life. Born into a large mercantile family, he was allowed amateur music-making as a child but music was out of the question as a profession, and he eventually went into the family wool company. Not until he went to the United States at the age of 22 did he have the freedom to study composition. He later studied at Leipzig, where he met Grieg, and he eventually settled near Paris.

The composers who most influenced Delius were Wagner and Grieg, and the latter influence can be heard in the two vocalises that make up To Be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water (1917). In the first vocalise, the texture consists of a mosaic of short motives and chordal sequences which continually evolve and regroup. In the second, a diatonic melody is given an increasingly chromatic accompaniment, which again becomes diatonic at the end.

Peter Warlock (1894-1930) was a personal friend of Delius's and was much influenced by him in his youth. He was also greatly interested in the music of England's past, however. Under his real name of Philip Heseltine, he wrote on music and edited neglected English works, particularly of Elizabethan and Jacobean composers. This too had an influence on his work.

In Yarmouth Fair, Warlock arranged a folk song, recorded by a friend of his, for tenor and piano (the present choral arrangement was made by C. Armstrong Gibbs). Again the harmony changes for each verse, becoming more and more chromatic, although ending diatonically.

Sir Michael Tippett today, at the age of 76, is one of England's leading composers. He came to music relatively late however, did not produce his first acknowledged work until he was 30, and failed to attract much public notice until he was nearly 40.

He wrote his oratorio A Child of Our Time in 1939-41, using traditional Lutheran passions and Handelian oratorios as models, even down to the use of black spirituals in the place of the Lutheran Chorales. The integration of these popularly derived simple melodies with Tippett's own complex music presented something of a problem; his solution was to reduce the spirituals to their simplest common denominator, a minor triad with added 7th, and to base his own music on this chord, while at the same time adding greater rhythmic complexity to the spirituals.

John Rutter's Fancies is a cycle of six choral settings with piano accompaniment. The composer has again reset traditional songs; in this case it is the rhythm in particular that is altered.

Faire is the Heaven, by William H. Harris (1883-1973), draws on another old English tradition: the Anglican anthem. Here the two choruses answer one another antiphonally before joining together for the final climax.

- Notes by Eveline Houtman

Next Faculty of Music Event: University of Toronto Wind Symphony, Sunday, March 29, 1981 at 3 p.m.
MacMillan Theatre